

**REMARKS**

Claims 2-7, 9-15, 17-24, 26-29, 32-39, 41, 42, 44, and 45 are pending. Claims 1, 16, 25, 40 and 43 have been cancelled; claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9, 10, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 26, 29, 32, 37, 41 and 44 have been amended by this response. Reconsideration and allowance of Applicant's claims are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 16, 25, 40, and 43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,141,648 to Bonissone et al. ("Bonissone") in view of Japanese Application No. JP10091334 to Ueda ("Ueda"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is believed that the examiner intended to reject claims 1, 16, 25, 40, and 43 under Section 103(a) and not Section 102(e). In any case, regardless of the statutory basis for the rejection, Applicant disagrees with and traverses the rejection. However, in light of the number of allowed claims in the application and to further prosecution of the allowed claims, Applicant has cancelled claims 1, 16, 25, 40, and 43 to place the application in condition for allowance and will pursue prosecution of the rejected claims in a continuing application.

Claims 2-7, 9-15, 17-24, 26-29, 32-38, 41, 42, 44, and 45 were objected as depending from a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent format. Accordingly, claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9, 10, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 26, 29, 32, 37, 41 and 44 have been amended to be placed in independent format incorporating all elements of any base claims. Claims 4, 11-15, 19, 21, 24, 27, 28, 33-36, 38, 39, 42, and 45 depend from these amended claims. As a result, claims 2-7, 9-15, 17-24, 26-29, 32-38, 41, 42, 44, and 45 are in condition for allowance.

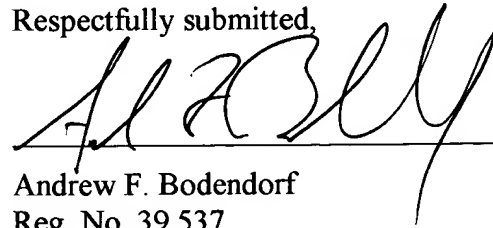
Application No. 09/635,652  
Alex Skirpa  
Amendment of February 26, 2004

It is respectfully submitted that all claims are in condition for allowance, and early notice of the same is respectfully solicited. If any questions remain, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Date: FEBRUARY 26, 2004

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. F. Bodendorf', written over a horizontal line.

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